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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001904

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: ETHNIC HATRED ON THE RISE IN BUKAVU: CROWD ATTACKS
PEACEKEEPERS SEEN WITH "TUTSI"

REF: A. A: KINSHASA 1884

[1](#)B. B: KINSHASA 1874 C: KINSHASA 1870

[1](#)C. D: KINSHASA 1807

Classified By: Poloff Gons Nachman for Reasons 1.5 B and D

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. A large crowd threw rocks and threatened to kill UN peacekeepers whose vehicle had broken down in the center of Bukavu on October 6 after they saw them transporting a man of Tutsi appearance. Although this person was a long time MONUC Congolese interpreter of Mushi ethnicity, the crowd asserted that he was a Rwandan infiltrator. Despite the fact that this incident took place close to the office of the regional military commander, neither he nor his troops intervened to disperse the crowd for two hours until UN personnel threatened to shoot in self-defense. This incident as well as demonstrations against the return of Banyamulenge refugees in Uvira (reftels), is further evidence of a dangerous campaign of manipulation and intolerance against Congolese of Tutsi ethnicity by the media in Kinshasa and by civil society, military, and church figures in South Kivu. End Summary.

Crowd Targets Peacekeepers Seen with "Tutsi"

[1](#)2. (C) MONUC sources in Bukavu described to poloff October 6 an incident which took place in Bukavu the preceding day. At approximately 10:30 AM a MONUC APC broke down in the center of Bukavu. The APC was transporting Uruguayan peacekeepers and a Congolese interpreter who works for MONUC. A woman who saw the interpreter's face assumed that he was a Tutsi and started screaming that MONUC was transporting a Rwandan infiltrator. A crowd gathered quickly around the peacekeepers and began insulting MONUC, throwing rocks, and demanding access to the Tutsi. The individual in question was in fact a Mushi and not a Tutsi, but he happened to have facial features associated with Tutsis.

FARDC's General Mabe Ignores Situation for Two Hours

[1](#)3. (C) The crowd around the peacekeepers grew to over a thousand people, including many students, and the threats continued for close to two hours. As this incident was taking place, MONUC staff tried to reach FARDC's 10th military region commander General Mbuja Mabe, whose office was located less than 150 meters from where the crowd had assembled. Mabe did not answer MONUC's phone calls and FARDC soldiers present in the area did not intervene to disperse the crowd. Once the crowd started to threaten to burn peacekeepers alive, MONUC said that it would fire in self-defense. At this point, Mabe emerged from his office and his soldiers started to disperse the crowd. According to MONUC, it would have been unlikely that Mabe, whose office window faces the street where the crowd had gathered, would not have seen or heard the large crowd for the two hours that they threatened the peacekeepers.

[1](#)4. (C) MONUC staff reported that the same crowd which threatened the peacekeepers also looted the offices of the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma (RCD-G) located in the same area. FARDC soldiers did not intervene to stop the crowd from entering the premises of this political party. On the contrary, according to MONUC sources, FARDC soldiers actually incited the crowd and even laughed as both peacekeepers and the RCD-G offices were attacked. Several Uruguayan peacekeepers suffered injuries, albeit not serious ones, as a result of the attack on the APC.

Media Propaganda Against Tutsis Continues

[1](#)5. (U) The pro-government Kinshasa daily newspaper "L'Avenir" published an article about the Bukavu incident, but it claimed falsely that a riot had been averted thanks to Mabe's intervention after MONUC had hidden two Rwandans in a tank. Another major daily newspaper, "La Reference Plus", published the same day a front page article from a Bukavu NGO on the Gatumba massacre. This NGO alleged that the victims at Gatumba had not been Banyamulenge refugees, but Rwandan Tutsi soldiers who had infiltrated the camp to attack the Congo. The usually moderate newspaper provided prominent coverage to this five-page article without questioning the credibility of the baseless allegations.

16. (C) MONUC and UNHCR sources in Bukavu have also referred to a campaign by civil society, politicians, the military, and church leaders in South Kivu against the return of Banyamulenge refugees, portraying members of this ethnic group in public and private statements as non-Congolese and suggesting that they are Rwandan infiltrators bent on attacking the Congo.

Comment

17. (C) The attack on MONUC peacekeepers in Bukavu by a large crowd of civilians who thought MONUC was hiding a "Tutsi" illustrates the high level of paranoia and animosity which has been fomented in South Kivu against this ethnic group. The demonstrations in Uvira against the return of Banyamulenge (ethnic Tutsis) refugees from Burundi has also been part of a related manipulation effort by hard-line elements in South Kivu. Further ethnically-motivated attacks in this province could lead to a major incident threatening the peace process and the transition. The GDRC needs to take a stand to halt a growing campaign of ethnic hatred in South Kivu and elsewhere.

18. (U) Bujumbura minimize considered.
DOUGHERTY